

Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act. This is the successor bill to H.R. 2966 and H.R. 3573 which we introduced in the 106th Congress.

Madam Speaker, the United States is the greatest military power in the world. We could never have achieved such superiority without the millions of Americans who risked all to serve this great country. These patriots put the security of home and family on the line to defend the freedoms of all Americans. We do not hesitate to ask American men and women to make military service a career. And what do they ask for in return? All they ask is that the promises made when they entered the service are fulfilled when they retire.

Americans who agreed to serve a military career, at least 20 years, to protect our democracy were promised lifetime health care benefits by recruiters. But for many, the promised health care was not delivered. The Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act would restore adequate health care to our military retirees by enabling them to elect coverage under the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program.

Last year, Congress responded to overwhelming grassroots support for the Keep Our Promise Act by including portions of the bill in the 2001 National Defense Authorization Act. Congress took the historic step of extending TRICARE, the military health care program, to military retirees beyond the age of 65 beginning in FY 2002. Finally, elderly military retirees will be able to keep TRICARE as a supplement to Medicare just like elderly civilian Federal retirees can keep their FEHBP as a supplement to Medicare.

Unfortunately, Congress did not address the pressing health care needs of military retirees under age 65 who must continue coverage under a TRICARE program that is woefully inadequate for many of them. TRICARE essentially offers health care benefits to retirees at military treatment facilities on a space-available basis. That is, they can pay for treatment if there is room for them at a military base. But with downsizing and base closures, access to military health care is difficult. It is impossible for those who cannot travel even short distances. And many retirees who do not live near bases cannot find a civilian doctor who participates in TRICARE. The Promise Act will allow retirees who are not well served by TRICARE to participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan.

Madam Speaker, retirees who entered the service prior to June 7, 1956, when the program now known as TRICARE was enacted actually saw much of their promised and earned benefits taken away. Under the Keep Our Promise Act, the United States Government would keep its word to this most elder-

ly group of retirees by paying the full cost of FEHBP enrollment. Military retirees across the country will tell you that this is landmark legislation to fulfill the government's broken promise for which they have been fighting for years. Madam Speaker, when you or I or anyone else buys something on the open market, we are always warned to let the buyer beware. But military recruiters are not salesmen. Recruiters are agents of the United States Government, the American people.

Should Americans doubt their own government? We owe it to our military retirees who were led to believe they would receive lifetime health care that the government will be there for them. Madam Speaker, it is up to Congress to adequately fund TRICARE so it can provide the level of health care we owe our military retirees. And we must make sure that the Defense Department administers TRICARE in a manner consistent with that goal. Right now TRICARE does not properly serve many of our military retirees. They need to be treated fairly and compassionately. This is what the Keep Our Promise Act does.

Passing this bill will let America's military retirees who served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf know that we honor and respect them by keeping our word to them. And passing this bill will get the attention of the next generation of Americans who must not be discouraged from military service.

Madam Speaker, we should keep our promise to America's Military retirees. We should pass the Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act.

VACATING HOUSE RESOLUTION 11

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the proceedings whereby House Resolution 11 was considered and adopted are vacated since the same resolution had been previously adopted as H. Res. 10.

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment concurrent resolutions of the House of the following titles:

S. Con. Res. 1. Concurrent resolution to provide for the counting on January 6, 2001, of the electoral votes for President and Vice President of the United States.

S. Con. Res. 2. Concurrent resolution to extend the life of the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies and the provisions of Senate Concurrent Resolution 90 of the One Hundred Sixth Congress.

The message also announced that a committee consisting of two Senators be appointed to join such committee as may be appointed by the House to wait

upon the President of the United States and inform him that a quorum of each House is assembled and that the Congress is ready to receive any communication he may be pleased to make.

The message also announced that the Secretary inform the House that a quorum of the Senate is assembled and that the Senate is ready to proceed to business.

The message also announced that the House of Representatives be notified of the election of ROBERT C. BYRD, a Senator from the State of West Virginia, as President pro tempore.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Member (at the request of Mr. SHOWS) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. SHOWS, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SHOWS. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Saturday, January 6, 2001, at 11 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting a request to make available previously appropriated emergency funds for the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended; (H. Doc. No. 107-10); to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

2. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting a request to make available previously appropriated emergency funds for the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended; (H. Doc. No. 107-8); to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

3. A letter from the General Counsel, Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, transmitting the Board's final rule—Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards [Docket No. 2000-01] (RIN: 3014-AA25) received December 19, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

4. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule—Regulations implementing